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**BULLETIN
OF THE
CENTER FOR
CHILDREN'S
BOOKS**

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED
WITH ANNOTATIONS

- * Asterisks denote books of special distinction.
- R Recommended.
- Ad Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.
- M Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.
- NR Not recommended.
- SpC Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.
- SpR A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.

Except for pre-school years, reading range is given for grade rather than for age of child.

C.U. Curricular Use.

D.V. Developmental Values.

* * *

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Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO • GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL

Volume 39

FEBRUARY, 1986

Number 6

New Titles for Children and Young People

Adams, Faith. *El Salvador: Beauty Among the Ashes*. Dillon, 1986. ISBN 0-87518-309-3. illus. with photographs. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R
4-7

Unusually honest coverage of a wartorn country, this does not restrict comments on the political situation to a few isolated paragraphs, but shows how the civil war affects every aspect of Salvadoran life. Problems of poverty are discussed as well ("almost half of the children in El Salvador die before they are five years old"), but daily life, history, culture, religion, and economics are not neglected. Color photographs reveal a cross section of the society. Well organized for student research, this includes relevant information on U.S. involvement in El Salvador, a "fast facts" section, maps, a list of Salvadoran consulates in the U.S. and Canada, an extensive glossary of Spanish terms with pronunciation, and a selected bibliography of mostly adult books.

C.U. History—Central America

Adkins, Jan. *Workboats*; written and illus. by Jan Adkins. Scribner, 1985. ISBN 0-684-18228-9. 29p. \$11.95.

Ad
5-7

Adkins uses a light fictional framework (a hunt for a boat missing during a storm) to describe some of the boats—mostly small craft—that are used by those who work as fishermen, on ferries, for the Coast Guard, or as tuggers and towers. The text gives a good deal of information lucidly, and the fictional base is not too obtrusive, although it is clearly contrived and adds little. The one weakness of the book is that on some of the pages the charcoal and graphite drawings are fussy and crowded, a particular pity in the work of a book artist whose drawings are usually meticulously clear.

Adler, Carole S. *Good-bye Pink Pig*. Putnam, 1985. ISBN 0-399-21282-5. 176p. \$13.95.

Ad
4-6

This isn't as tragic as Marilyn Sach's *The Bears' House* but it is similar in the pattern that overrides the story, a fantasy life that helps a child cope with the real problems she cannot solve. Shy, docile, and conforming, Amanda is cowed by her colorful and decisive mother; she knows that a woman on the school maintenance staff, affectionately called "Pearly" by the children, is her paternal grandmother, but she's been told (by her mother) to stay away from Pearly, who is "common." Pink Pig is a tiny member of Amanda's collection of miniatures and the key to Amanda's adventures in the Little World of her collection. It is so real to her that she cannot understand why her best friend and her beloved brother think she's crazy to believe in the reality of Pink Pig. The balance tips: Mother is fired for "borrowing" from an account she's been handling at the bank, and leaves town; Amanda's brother enlists in the army, and Amanda goes to live with Pearly, who is warm, loving, and as patient as mother had been impatient. The characters are strong, the plot firm and well-paced in its development. The book would be more cohesive were the daydreaming/fantasy episodes less frequent, less

explicit, and less extensive.

D.V. Grandmother-child relations; Imaginative powers; Self-confidence

Anderson, Dave. *The Story of Football*. Morrow, 1985. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-05634-2; Paper ed. ISBN 0-688-05635-0. 196p. illus. with photographs. Trade ed. \$13.00; Paper ed. \$8.95.

R
6-10 Veteran sportswriter Dave Anderson has a much better ability than most to put the players and the plays into perspective. After a solid historical background centered around the personalities who forwarded the game from the late nineteenth century, this overview proceeds through chapters on each position, its functions and moves, and its best representatives. Here Anderson proves particularly adept at moving from one great name to the next in a telling pattern instead of a hodgepodge. He also manages to abstract personalities from superlatives with quotes and anecdotes, as in the Redskin offensive linemen's acquisition of their famous nickname. An assistant coach stares at the 292-pound left guard Russ Grimm: "You," said Bugel, "are a prototype hog." Intelligent coverage for fans and players alike.

C.U. Physical education

Arnold, Caroline. *Music Lessons for Alex*; illus. with photographs by Richard Hewett. Houghton/Clarion, 1985. ISBN 0-89919-328-5. 64p. \$12.95.

Ad
3-5 Alex so enjoys the violins at a concert that her wish to learn to play the instrument is promptly granted; photographs of adequate quality illustrate the stages of Alex's training and document her progress from neophyte to recital performer. The book is based on a Suzuki program and makes it clear that learning to play the violin is enjoyable and requires discipline. The writing style is capable, the story told as narrative rather than case study, a bit stiff but straightforward in writing style.

Avi. *Bright Shadow*. Bradbury, 1985. ISBN 0-02-707750-0. 167p. \$11.95.

Ad
4-7 The dark side of magic haunts this tale of a young girl who happens to be in the right place at the right time to inherit the last five of her kingdom's ancient magic wishes from a dying wizard. Warned to wish for nothing for herself nor to reveal her powers, Morwenna finds herself locked into a conflict between the evil king and his suffering subjects. In the end, the former is defeated and the latter freed, but not before Morwenna's best friend Swen has been killed and she herself has become a hermitic wanderer guarding the last wish. The writing is not as smooth as Avi's usual, with informal conversation slightly out of sync with the high fantasy tone, and a couple of contrived scenes. Yet the fast pace, easy-to-read style, and challenging conclusion will hook a fair share of readers.

D.V. Courage

Beattie, Ann. *Spectacles*; illus. by Winslow Pels. Workman, 1985. ISBN 0-89480-926-1. 26p. \$10.95.

M
4-6 A blurry fantasy illustrated with pictures in soft, dark colors, misty and romantic, never achieves credibility within its own parameters. Beattie writes well but she is awkward in writing for children: her story wavers and tilts toward the precious as her protagonist has meaningful conversations with a very old relative. Alison sees the world through her great-grandmother's eyes, in a sense, when she puts on the old woman's spectacles. There are italicized lists of memories or gifts, speculation by inanimate objects, and other bits of literary decoration that fail to compensate for a thin plot.

D.V. Older-younger generations

Bess, Clayton. *Big Man and the Burn-Out*. Houghton, 1985. ISBN 0-395-36173-7. 197p. \$12.95.

R
7-12 The end of Jess Judd's last year in junior high finds him still friendless and fighting his rigid grandmother, bored with school, and chafing against one obnoxious teacher in particular, who insists Jess do a science project. It is this very assignment that proves a water-shed when, partly to defy his grandmother, he undertakes to hatch a goose egg he's found on their farm and subsequently connects with a failing classmate, who, like himself, is an orphan harboring bitter loneliness. Both the boys have champions in their corners: Jess, a compassionate step-grandfather, and Meechum, an adoring half-brother stricken with sickle-cell anemia. Meechum's step-father and Jess' grandmother, too, are caring but stiffnecked, and it is an intelligent English teacher who is able to change both boys' discontent with school. This teacher's homosexuality is dealt with openly, as is, in one scene, the two boys' sexual tension. There is a lot going on in this book, including the complex racial mix of Meechum's family. There's also some heavy symbolism, as in the grafted fruit tree that becomes Meechum's redeeming science project. But if the story is slightly overloaded, the characters carry the weight easily. They are vivid and interesting, from the complex protagonist to each barnyard fowl. Jess' maturation comes off convincingly paced and deeply hopeful.

D.V. Friendship values; Interpersonal understanding

Bethancourt, T. Ernesto. *The Me Inside of Me*. Lerner, 1985. ISBN 0-8225-0728-5. 155p. \$10.95.

Ad
6-9 Freddie (Alfredo Flores) is the seventeen-year-old narrator of a story about socio-economic pigeonholes, racial pride and prejudice, and finding one's own identity. He acquires a million dollars through the tragic air accident that kills his family and results in flight insurance. Of Mexican descent, Freddie meets prejudice when he enrolls in a private school; he is expelled when another Latino, a snob, frames him. His two friends are a Jewish boy and a black girl (with whom he falls in love) and they stand by him. Freddie is an amicable and sensible boy; his story ends in a postlude chapter written a year later: he is in Greenwich Village, studying art, and his girl has just taken his advice and chosen her own career rather than the one her family prefers. She also indicates that she will soon be with him despite her family's prejudice against someone who is not black. The book has a sympathetic protagonist, a light but controlled style, and intermittent humor. It addresses some issues that concern most adolescents but it is weakened by the fact that the characters, almost without exception, seem stock figures.

D.V. Death, adjustment to; Education, valuing and seeking; Interracial understanding

Brown, Ruth. *The Big Sneeze*; written and illus. by Ruth Brown. Lothrop, 1985. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-04666-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-04665-7. 24p. Library ed. \$11.88; Trade ed. \$11.75.

R
3-5
yrs. In the grand old tradition of humorous chain reactions, this illustrates the hubbub resulting from a fly's landing on a dozing farmer's nose. The farmer sneezes the fly into a spider's web, an activity that draws a cat that wakes the dog that scatters the hens that panic the donkey that brings the shrieking wife. "I only sneezed!" says the befuddled farmer, with splattered eggs dripping down his head. This is a formula that almost always works with young children, but here it is enhanced with spacious, light-filled artwork that commands attention. The textural variations created by fine lines and brush strokes make every corner of the dusty barn a place to explore, and the perspectives—a closeup of fly-on-nose, an action shot of hurtling cat—put the viewer right in the midst of the commotion. In fact, these seem like motion-picture paintings, with fine focus and a golden-brown glow to each composition.

C.U. Reading aloud

Buckley, Helen E. *Someday with My Father*; illus. by Ellen Eagle. Harper, 1985. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-020878-3; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-020877-5. 28p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.50.

Ad K-2 A small girl daydreams, in a repeated pattern, about some of the things she'll do with her father someday...ski, fish, hike. Each episode ends with the father saying "What a good skier (or fisherman or hiker) you are!" Then, the punch line "Someday, when my cast comes off." Meanwhile Father sits by the bed and reads to his child "What a good reader you are!" Drawings in warm-tone pastels illustrate (adequately, but without distinction) a brief story with a warm father-daughter relationship and indicate—bar the cast—an active protagonist. This is slight in structure and static in quality.

D.V. Father-daughter relations

Buckley, William F. *The Temptation of Wilfred Malachey*; illus. by John Gurney. Workman, 1985. ISBN 0-89480-923-7. 39p. \$10.95.

M 5-7 A poor boy at a rich boy's school, Wilfred takes to petty crime in order to have money. Adept at using computers, he discovers that one of his teachers has programmed himself into material comfort. Wilfred sneaks in and manages to get in touch with "OMEGAGOD," who grants the boy's request (less extravagant than his first, one million dollars), and the self-styled "very intelligent goblin" in the machine then leaves. End of story, which has fantasy awkwardly grafted on realism, a profusion of loose threads, and no depth of characterization. What it has is adequate writing style and interesting illustrations, technically adept but artistically contrived.

Cairo, Shelley. *Our Brother Has Down's Syndrome*; written by Shelley, Jasmine, and Tara Cairo; illus. with photographs by Irene McNeil. Annick/Firefly, 1985. Trade ed. ISBN 0-920303-30-7; Paper ed. ISBN 0-920303-31-5. 21p. Trade ed. \$12.95; Paper ed. \$4.95.

Ad 2-4 Color photographs of the two girls who are the authorial voice, and of their small brother Jai, make two things clear: Jai is an engaging little boy, and he is much loved. The message of the book is that a child with Down's syndrome may be slow but can learn and does share the needs and interests of all children of the same age. There is an attempt made to give some facts about this congenital handicap, but it is so sketchy that it may raise more questions than it answers.

D.V. Handicaps, adjustment to

Cajacob, Thomas. *Close to the Wild: Siberian Tigers in a Zoo*; written by Thomas Cajacob and Teresa Burton; illus. with photographs by Thomas Cajacob. Carolrhoda, 1985. ISBN 0-87614-227-7. 43p. \$12.95.

R 3-6 Majestic color photographs illustrate a readable, fact-filled text on the habitat and characteristics of Siberian tigers, with emphasis on zoo environments and treatment of this endangered species. The discussion of selective breeding serves as a good introduction to the subject of bloodlines and genetic pools. Clear, interesting, and eye-catching.

C.U. Science

Carlson, Natalie Savage. *Spooky and the Ghost Cat*; illus. by Andrew Glass. Lothrop, 1985. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-04317-8; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-04316-X. 30p. Library ed. \$11.88; Trade ed. \$11.75.

Ad 4-6 yrs. A Halloween read-aloud follows in the footsteps of *Spooky Night* by the same team. This time, Spooky finds a friend, a white cat that alternately plays with him and disappears, and he frees her from the very same witch who had held him captive. His mission involves a wild night ride on the witch's broom, the climax of a moderately suspenseful narrative with some rhythmic sound effects. The illustrations carry their fair

share of the fun; sharp colors on a rough-textured surface are dramatic in capturing the flowing movements of the cats and developing scary tidbits like Spooky's bared fangs, the first glimpse of the witch's feet, and all the central characters' *green* eyes.

C.U. Hallowe'en

Chetwin, Grace. *Out of the Dark World*. Lothrop, 1985. ISBN 0-688-04272-4. 154p. \$10.25.

Ad 5-7 Who was the boy who called for help in the nightmares Meg was having with increasing frequency? Why were these evil dreams filled with such a sense of danger and desolation, and why did they cast a pall over her days? When Meg tells her sister Sue, the latter thinks of a way to gain support by magic, and that is how Meg causes two spirits to materialize, Peter Saltifer and Morgan le Fay, both of whom help her face the Dark World to accomplish the rescue of a never-met cousin whose body lies dying in a hospital while he is being taken over in spirit by the forces of evil. The story has some appealing elements, but it is too intricate and ornate to work as a fantasy. There is a forced and complex mechanism that moves Meg from the real world to the fantasy world, a stress on her inheritance of "Celtic blood," and an element of contrivance in the corporeal appearance of the dream-cousin in the vicinity although each has come to America unbeknownst to the other.

Corcoran, Barbara. *Face the Music*. Atheneum, 1985. ISBN 0-689-31139-7. 178p. \$12.95.

Ad 8-10 Smothered by her divorced mother's attention and demands, Marcie makes sure she gets home from college every available weekend, but her interest in playing bluegrass music has planted a seed of revolt. A family visit to her sister's wedding in Texas proves to be a watershed. There, with the support of relatives and newfound music friends, she decides to take a year off and play bluegrass, sending her neurotic mother gently but firmly back to New England. The theme is a bit overdeveloped here, with Marcie's mother so whiny that the reader wants to ditch her long before the main character does. However, Marcie is likeable; even if her progress on the guitar seems magically swift, the growth of her perceptions is realistically paced, and she does what many young adults long to do. A secondary character disturbed by wartime experiences seems more distracting than indicative of Marcie's need to protect her own space. Readable, though, and relevant.

D.V. Mother-daughter relations

Curry, Jane Louise. *The Great Flood Mystery*. Atheneum, 1985. ISBN 0-689-50306-7. 171p. \$12.95.

Ad 4-6 This has many elements of the standard middle-grades mystery story: an indefatigable and perspicacious child detective and his pals, a doubting adult, and a not inconsiderate proportion of contrivance. On the other hand, there's plenty of action, a bit of danger, some suspense to give the story appeal, and some local history to give it substance. A mysterious burglar seems to be interested only in historical records, but Gordy, whose family is staying with an elderly relative while they rent their house to a professor, discovers, with help from some older residents, that a missing street map may lead to treasure buried at the time of the Johnstown Flood. It will probably surprise few mystery story addicts that the burglar is unmasked and the treasure found. Characterization is shallow, the writing style animated.

Cuyler, Margery. *Freckles and Willie*; illus. by Marsha Winborn. Holt, 1986. ISBN 0-03-003772-7. 31p. \$12.95.

Like Wilhelm's *I'll Always Love You* (reviewed in the January, 1986 issue), this is a love story between boy and dog, but the eternal verities of the former book are replaced

Ad here by a light tone in honor of Valentine's Day. Willie is a lonely boy whose sole play-
4-6 mate is his dog, Freckles, until Jane moves in next door. Willie is briefly enamored of
yrs. Jane to the neglect of Freckles, to whom Jane claims to be allergic and of whose doggie
habits she complains. After she rejects Willie's valentine card as well, Willie returns to
his best friend in a joyful reunion complete with a dog-biscuit-decorated valentine. Pen-
and-wash illustrations framed in mottled rose are lively enough to compensate for
Jane's puzzling reaction ("Yuck! . . . I hate valentines"), and the theme commends the
book as a holiday supplement.

D.V. Friendship values

Davis, Gibbs. *Katy's First Haircut*; illus. by Linda Shute. Houghton, 1985. ISBN 0-395-38942-9.
30p. \$12.95.

R An unpretentious little book that catches exactly the nuances of anticipation and
3-6 anxiety attending physical changes for a young child. Katy's long hair is beautiful but a
yrs. real pain, and always in the way. She persuades her mother to take her to the beauty
salon (after cutting her doll's hair to see how it looks), makes faces in the mirror, and
revels in the attention. . . until her hair is gone ("Put it back!"). Then there's a period of
adjustment, when she will not take her hat off in school, and finally, enjoyment, as she
turns somersaults without hair in her eyes and reassures a schoolmate about to get *her*
hair cut. The crayon and charcoal illustrations are competent and candid.

D.V. Self-improvement

Ethridge, Kenneth E. *Toothpick*. Holiday House, 1985. ISBN 0-8234-0585-0. 118p. \$10.95.

Ad Almost everybody in high school teased Jamie, the narrator, because he was so thin,
6-9 but when the new girl came into the classroom, she was immediately dubbed "tooth-
pick." She was even thinner than he. Jamie is a bit embarrassed by her frank friendli-
ness, but as they become friends, he realizes that "Toothpick" is brave, cheerful, and
admirable—a victim of cystic fibrosis who accepts her handicap and asks for no special
treatment. The other plot thread is Jamie's relationship with the pretty girl on whom
he's long had a crush; there is some merging of the two plot lines, but not enough to give
the book impact. What remains is an adequately written story (funny despite the serious
issue) with credible characters, natural dialogue, and an array of issues about which
adolescents are concerned.

D.V. Boy-girl relations; Courage; Friendship values; Handicaps, adjustment to

Freedman, Russell. *Sharks*. Holiday House, 1985. ISBN 0-8234-0582-6. 38p. illus. with photo-
graphs. \$11.95.

R A perennially favorite subject gets solid, selective treatment here as Freedman covers
3-6 general characteristics of the shark family, plus specifics of its 350 members that read
like Ripley's believe-it-or-not. There's certainly no need to sensationalize such interest-
ing material, and the text never does. From the basic mechanism of a shark's moving
teeth to a listing of stomach contents documented from several catches, this gives a
careful picture of one of the best adapted creatures in the aquatic environment. The
style is smooth ("This shark is doing what a shark does best"), the coverage well con-
sidered, and the black-and-white photographs clearly composed for added information.

C.U. Science

Freschet, Berniece. *Owl in the Garden*; illus. by Carol Newsom. Lothrop, 1985. Library ed. ISBN
0-688-04048-9; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-04047-0. 30p. Library ed. \$11.88; Trade ed. \$11.75.

A mini-mystery involves the birds and animals in an autumn garden, all scurrying
around in preparation for winter. Blue Jay insists someone has stolen the three peanuts

Ad he hid, Owl asks "WHO? WHOooo?" Grasshopper chirrups "KATY-DID. KATY-DIDN'T." Robin, Rabbit, Gopher, and Crow all deny the deed, while the observant young reader will realize immediately that Squirrel is the culprit (and may wonder why the other animals haven't thought to ask him). Meanwhile, Bluejay has flown off screaming "thief—thief—thief!" without ever finding out the truth from his friends, now settling down for the first frost. Even with the sound effects, this is a very thin story, but it's bolstered by paintings of an idyllic rural scene. The handsome color and brush work in the double-page spreads will lend appeal for adults discussing seasonal change with young children.

C.U. Seasons (unit)

Gardner, Sandra. *Teenage Suicide*; by Sandra Gardner and Gary B. Rosenberg. Messner, 1985. ISBN 0-671-49975-0. 125p. \$9.79.

Ad A text that discusses various aspects of teenage suicide is marred by careless writing (errors of syntax, non sequiturs, flat statements, generalizations) and by poor organization of material that is often repetitive and occasionally contrivedly anecdotal. Gardner's descriptions of causes, effects, behavior patterns, danger signals, and preventive measures are useful and, given the unfortunate numbers of adolescent suicides, should interest young people. She provides no statistics but does cite sources for obtaining help, and precedes the index with a divided bibliography.

Genet, Barbara. *Ta-Poo-Ach Means Apple*; written and illus. by Barbara Genet. Alternatives in Religious Education, Inc., 1985. ISBN 0-86705-015-2. 43p. \$10.95.

NR Although this attempts to solve the design problems that necessarily accompany a foreign-language ABC in a different script, it's not very successful. The Hebrew letter appears in a square of orange, a Hebrew word beginning with that letter appears beside a square of the same color, the transliteration appears beside a yellow square, and the English translation beside a brown square. At no point is the pronunciation for the letter given, so that a child sees the letter for Aleph but does not know how to say it. There are also a confusing number of objects in most of the illustrations: the pictures for Heh-geh, or steering wheel, includes a whole dashboard with keys and windshield wipers, etc. Finally, the colors are garish and the drawing awkward. There are no really good aleph-bet books on the market; better that children should wait for one.

C.U. Languages

Gibbons, Gail. *Valentine's Day*; written and illus. by Gail Gibbons. Holiday House, 1985. ISBN 0-8234-0572-9. 31p. \$12.95.

Ad Geared for the day care and nursery school set, this gives less information than the author's introduction to other holidays, but it is festive and fits into the kinds of activities teachers often generate around Valentine's Day. The graphic motifs of red hearts, flowers, lace, and sweets are generously represented in bright, poster-style illustrations over a one or two-line text running along the bottom of each framed page. Instructions for making valentines and a box to hold them appear at the end of the book. A party-time accessory.

C.U. Valentine's Day

Gondosch, Linda. *Who Needs a Bratty Brother?* illus. by Helen Cogancherry. Lodestar, 1985. ISBN 0-525-67170-6. 118p. \$10.95.

Ad Actually, what both 11-year-old Kelly and her 9-year-old brother seem to need is a spanking, given the battles they wage in their running warfare. Ben's tricks range from pushing his little sister's head under water to letting her parakeet outside; Kelly retali-

ates by trying to give Ben away to various neighbors and/or institutions and yelling at him all the time. In the end, she begins to fear her scheme of asking a witchy neighbor to turn him into a frog may really work, and he draws sympathy by trying to run away. The two come to a little better understanding, but not before wearing out the theme. Young readers, however, will find a lot of common ground here and enjoy antics they either do or wish they dared to do.

D.V. Brothers-sisters; Jealousy, overcoming

Griffith, Helen V. *Nata*; illus. by Nancy Tafuri. Greenwillow, 1985. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-04977-X; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-04976-1. 23p. Library ed. \$11.88; Trade ed. \$11.75.

M 4-6 yrs. Nata the fairy plays a series of nasty tricks on her friends the bees, garter snake, and spider, and even forgets to say thank you when the toad saves her from a cat. It turns out that she is simply shedding her old wings for a new pair, which accounts for her bad mood and which she and the others, except for toad, seem to forget happens every year on the first day of summer. Both the story line and the creatures' dialogue are contrived, and Tafuri's watercolor paintings lack their usual freshness of shape and color. This seems a kind of modern version of the frothy old fairy-flower school.

Guernsey, JoAnn Bren. *Journey to Almost There*. Houghton/Clarion, 1985. ISBN 0-89919-338-2. 166p. \$11.95.

Ad 6-9 Because she is fifteen and has a learner's permit, Alison feels she can get away with taking her sick grandfather (a licensed driver) while he is sedated, and setting off in her mother's car to drive from Minnesota to Massachusetts. Mom and Alison have had an argument; Mom doesn't know her only child has taken the car or even where she's gone. The father who deserted his family when Alison was a baby is on the east coast and his daughter and father are about to surprise him. The writing style is adequate and the characterization consistent; what weakens the story are some of the premises on which it is built (that Mom, who is canny enough to figure things out and warn her ex-husband, doesn't call police in and give them the license number of her car, for example) and the stretched incidents that pad the story of the trip but that neither develop the characterization nor further the story line.

D.V. Grandparent-child relations

Hahn, Mary Downing. *The Jellyfish Season*. Houghton/Clarion, 1985. ISBN 0-89919-344-7. 182p. \$11.95.

R 5-9 twelve-going-on-thirteen-year-old Kathleen is feeling her age, caught between the demands of three younger sisters and the exciting pursuits of 14-year-old cousin Fay, who is secretly dating a handsome sailor. Kathleen's coping with more than personal image problems; her father has lost his job and drinks heavily, her family has moved in with the relatives, and, as Kathleen learns from Fay, her mother is pregnant again. While there's luckily a job for her father at the end of the book, this is a very realistic look at family stress and the permanent changes it can make. The characters, dialogue, and interpersonal dynamics are extremely well handled, though the pace is not as good as in the author's *Daphne's Book*. Vivid scenes make up for the lack of action, however, and there's plenty for early adolescents to identify with here. Above all, it's honest.

D.V. Family relations; Growing up

Haines, Gail Kay. *The Great Nuclear Power Debate*. Dodd, 1985. ISBN 0-396-08486-9. 176p. illus. with photographs. \$11.95.

Through the maze of facts and figures that trigger pro and con arguments on nuclear

R
7-12 power, the author threads her way as objectively as possible, imparting quite a lot of technical explanation along the way. Careful to give scientific orientation to each area of discussion, she is most concerned with dispelling the panic that replaces informed judgments on the part of a public that demands energy but denies a major viable source. The text does seem slightly cavalier at times in an effort to stay calm ("One thousand years of protection would be more than adequate" for isolated storage of high-level waste!), but coverage of background, building, operating, and even moth-balling nuclear power plants is carefully organized and detailed. The concluding summary and questions offer a real challenge to readers. A glossary, selective bibliography, and index are appended.

C.U. Science

Hall, Lynn. *Tazo and Me*; illus. with photographs by Jan Hall. Scribner, 1985. ISBN 0-684-18305-6. 42p. \$11.95.

R
5-7 Lynn Hall's readers already know, from her stories, of her knowledge about and affection for horses. In this nonfiction book, she tells a love story about her Paso Fino, Tazo, that is as affective as any of her fiction. The book will appeal especially to horse lovers, but other readers may also appreciate Hall's search for a horse that would be just right for her in disposition, habits, size, appearance, and gait. The details of training, riding, and several abortive attempts to find a good place to show Tazo are given in a conversational tone. Almost all of the many photographs are fuzzy and amateurish, but Tazo's charm and his owner's joyful pride come through.

D.V. Pets, care of

Hauptly, Denis J. *In Vietnam*. Atheneum, 1985. ISBN 0-689-31079-X. 175p. illus. with photographs. \$12.95.

R
8-12 More detailed than any other juvenile book on the subject so far, this traces the history of conflicts in and around Vietnam, including traditional hostilities with China and Cambodia and the long struggle against French colonial domination. The second half of the book is a careful reconstruction of American involvement and, finally, defeat. Hauptly's shaping of the information is excellent, although he is occasionally wordy (as in his description of Lyndon Johnson's broken-heartedness) and given to the odd remark self-consciously directed at young readers ("The motto 'Be Prepared' is not only used by the Boy Scouts"). At the same time, the text is sometimes very effectively styled, as in the moving chapter on the realities that American soldiers faced in Vietnam. Given the complexities of his canvas—the Indochinese, U.S., and international political scenes—Hauptly has organized a fair-minded and challenging presentation.

C.U. History—Modern

Hausherr, Rosmarie. *My First Kitten*; written and illus. with photographs by Rosmarie Hausherr. Macmillan, 1985. ISBN 0-02-743420-6. 46p. \$12.95.

R
K-3 A kitten should be so lucky as to land in this household, a caring, rural family photographed from the seven-year-old boy's request for a kitten to his preparation for and selection of it, and through the various stages of the cat's development. Quite a bit of information on cats works its way into the story, including safety tips, health needs, and feline habits both funny and annoying. A last page addressed to parents summarizes tips on pet care. The black-and-white photographs are large, clear, and well-composed, with no posturing on the part of the people or cutesiness in the presentation of the animal. An attractive introduction to responsible pet ownership.

C.U. Pets, care of

D.V. Responsibility

Herzig, Alison Cragin. *Shadows on the Pond*. Little, 1985. ISBN 0-316-35895-9. 243p. \$12.95.

Ad 6-9 Written with sympathetic percipience in a fairly smooth style, this has well-defined characters, an adequate knitting of the main story line and sub-plots, but an uneven pace. Jill, unhappy because her parents are in acrimonious conflict, looks forward to the joys of being reunited with her summer friend Migan and going with her to their hideout on an island in a beaver pond. The girls, later aided by a boy friend, conspire to sabotage the traps set by a surly, hostile hunter, Jeep; he soon suspects them and threatens them. Most of the book is about this conservationist cause; it ends when a local ne'er-do-well dynamites the beaver dam. Jill is hospitalized; she has helped save the life of a small child, who is even more seriously injured by the explosion. The bullying trapper takes off. Jill's parents reach accord. A purposive story, this should hold the attention of readers (particularly of animals lovers) even if they find the ending pat.

D.V. Animals, kindness to

Hines, Anna Grossnickle. *Cassie Bowen Takes Witch Lessons*; illus. by Gail Owens. Dutton, 1985. ISBN 0-525-44214-6. 136p. \$10.95.

Ad 4-6 Cassie has been best friends with Brenda since first grade, but when Sylvia begins to edge in and their fourth grade teacher assigns Cassie a project with the class nerd Agatha (or Saggy Aggy, as she's better known for her limp dresses), Cassie is left out in the cold. It takes real courage to befriend Agatha and ultimately lose Brenda, whom Cassie discovers and reveals as the thief of a precious music box belonging to Agatha's "witchy" grandmother. A secondary theme deals with the loss of parents, Agatha's in an automobile accident and Cassie's father to divorce. Though not badly written, this is a very pointed book, with action totally centered on the problem and characters divided into nasty and nice. On the other hand, it presents sympathetically a situation that many children face in their school friendships and need help in dealing with.

D.V. Divorce, adjustment to; Friendship values

Howard, Jane R. *When I'm Sleepy*; illus. by Lynne Cherry. Dutton, 1985. ISBN 0-525-44204-9. 20p. \$10.95.

R 3-5 yrs. In a bedtime chant to herself, a little girl imagines what it would be like to curl up with the cats in their basket, snuggle into a downy nest with fledglings, stretch out on a log with turtles, and so on through a litany of creatures at rest. Finally, she can no longer keep her eyes open and gratefully settles in her very own bed, with the imagined menagerie fading into a dream. Full-page illustrations in luminous color lend all the visual depth needed here and save the text from becoming static. There's humor in the picture of the child hanging upside down with the bat, comfort in her hug with the cave-bound bear, and lots of possibilities for identification of animals, their habitats, and their habits. A better-than-usual blend of art and popular appeal for lapsitters.

D.V. Imaginative concepts

Isenbart, Hans-Heinrich. *Birth of a Foal*; illus. with photographs by Thomas David. Carolrhoda, 1986. ISBN 0-87614-239-0. 43p. \$12.95.

R K-3 Unlike the Munoz book on baby horses, reviewed below, this has a very clear focus and organization, though at a somewhat more advanced level of text. The color photographs are even more striking than were the fine black-and-white ones for Isenbart's *A Foal is Born*, published in 1976 and now out of print. After a fairly detailed opening summary of the equine reproduction cycle, the narrative is simplified to descriptions of a foal's birth and early life, with careful note of facts such as nighttime births relating to safety in the wild. Diagrams of the development of the fetus and passage through the

birth canal, along with a glossary, conclude a well-designed book. Excellent coverage.
C.U. Science

Kay, Helen. *The First Teddy Bear*; illus. by Susan Detwiler. Stemmer House, 1985. ISBN 0-88045-042-8. 31p. \$12.95.

Ad 5-8 yrs. Conceptually, the author has taken advantage of a good opportunity to make history immediate to children in this story of a politically inspired toy. The information about President Theodore Roosevelt, candy-store owner Morris Michtom, cartoonist Clifford Merryman and the bearhunt that started it all is cleverly spliced. The style, however, is choppy and some of the information self-consciously simplified. Sepia drawings and full-color paintings are lively if occasionally awkward. Young listeners will overlook the stiff poses of the people, given the appeal of the capably drawn animals.

Kidd, Ronald. *The Glitch*. Lodestar, 1985. ISBN 0-525-67160-9. 117p. \$11.95.

NR 4-6 This is more frenetic than fantastical, with a sixth-grader who hates computers being sucked into the Computer Kingdom (actually shocked into a dream by picking up a live cable) and pursued by the evil Delete and her computer police. The King of Rom and the Queen of Ram are battling; a dragon named GIGO (garbage in, garbage out) threatens to demolish Benjamin Bean and his newfound friends M, Negatori, and Professor Babbage. Characters appear and disappear with the speed of light and a running string of corny jokes. The style is sophomoric and the situation forced. Someday there will be a good computer fantasy, but this is not it.

D.V. Imaginative powers

Kittleman, Laurence R. *Canyons Beyond the Sky*. Atheneum, 1985. ISBN 0-689-31138-9. 212p. \$13.95.

Ad 6-9 When Evan's summer plans fall through, his mother sends him to an archeological dig directed by his father, who treats him like a child, and an unwanted one at that. A geologist befriends Evan, however, and sets him exploring the nearby desert canyons, where he toughens and matures. The on-site "find" of a young boy's skeleton inspires Evan to try a vision quest, but he falls from a cliff and slips back 5,000 years; he is found and befriended by the boy whose bones the scientists had uncovered. Before Evan can make his way back to the present, he has learned much about the ancient culture of Antelope Boy, experienced his way of life, and witnessed his death. Evan's father is a stock figure, his rejection unbelievably meanminded, and their reconciliation too abrupt. But after a slow start, the story picks up considerable momentum, becoming forceful during Evan's period with the ancient tribe. A stimulating choice for students researching prehistoric and Indian life.

C.U. History—Ancient; Indians of North America

D.V. Father-son relations

Knox-Wagner, Elaine. *An Apartment's No Place for a Kid*; illus. by Rodney Pate. Whitman, 1985. ISBN 0-8075-0373-8. 29p. \$10.25.

Ad 2-3 Kelly, the narrator, has just moved to an apartment complex because her mother's new job is in the city. A latchkey kid, she agrees with the dour neighbor who says an apartment is no place for a kid. Being home alone is boring, and on one occasion, when there is persistent knocking on the door, frightening. Kelly observes safety precautions, gets in touch with her mother and the police, and then finds it's a deaf, elderly neighbor with some cookies. The neighbor becomes a friend, and Kelly learns through her some of the advantages (roller skating in the basement) of being in an apartment building. This is designed to be reassuring, and it deals with a situation that will be familiar to

many children, but the story is less effective for being as purposeful as it is, and the writing style is a bit choppy.

D.V. Self-reliance; Urban-rural contrasts

Krementz, Jill. *The Fun of Cooking*; written and illus. with photographs by Jill Krementz. Knopf, 1985. ISBN 0-394-54808-6. 121p. \$14.95.

R
5-9 There are almost two hundred photographs in this oversize book, and they are up to the usual Krementz standard. They bear out the concept of the title, for nineteen boys and girls (ages six to sixteen) share, through informational interviews that include tips, techniques, and details of recipes, the special dishes that they enjoy making. Ingredients, utensils, and instructions are carefully listed, and the text is preceded by some safety rules and helpful hints. The pages stay open but do not lie perfectly flat, but it's a minor weakness in a cookbook that is explicit and attractive, and that may entice readers, because they are addressed by their peers, into culinary experiments.

C.U. Hobbies

Kristensen, Preben. *We Live in South Africa*; written and illus. with photographs by Preben Kristensen and Fiona Cameron. Bookwright Press/Watts, 1985. ISBN 0-531-18005-0. 56p. \$9.40.

M
4-6 Each of a series of double-page spreads has a brief descriptive introduction, three-color photographs, and a first-person statement by a South African. The intent is to show the variety of peoples (the book does indeed do that) and to show the variety in their jobs and life styles. Racial and ethnic groups are adequately represented, but the text is often stilted and the book fails to give any sense of historical background or—although the subject of apartheid is cautiously mentioned by a minister—of the deep racial problems and conflict. Some general facts about South Africa, a brief glossary, and an index are provided.

C.U. Social studies

Lasky, Kathryn. *Home Free*. Macmillan, 1985. ISBN 0-02-751650-4. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.

M
8-10 Lasky is really writing three books here, a psychological novel, a time fantasy, and realistic fiction about human and natural cycles. Each story in itself is fascinating but doesn't always blend with the others. Fifteen-year-old Sam is the protagonist, just uprooted from the Midwest to New England after his father's death in an auto accident. His first real connection there is with an old man involved in defending a reservoir/game reserve from commercial exploitation. As the two observe and photograph bald eagles, Sam develops a friendship with an autistic girl, Lucy, who has a mystical affinity with the eagles and seems to be a reincarnation of an orphan who died in 1892 before the valley was flooded. The old man dies of cancer, passing on his dream of an undisturbed wilderness to Sam and Lucy, who enter into dialogue with the eagles and eventually see them establish a nest. While Sam's adjustment and relationships with his mother and the old man are well drawn, Lucy's quick recovery and absorption into Sam's household is problematic, as is her communication with the birds. By the same token, Sam's observations of the past are vivid, but the transitions confusing. An ambitious book, only partially successful.

C.U. Ecology

D.V. Death, adjustment to; Environmental concepts

Lawson, Don. *The Eagle and the Dragon: The History of U.S.-China Relations*. Crowell, 1985. Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04486-0; Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04485-2. 213p. illus. with photographs. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.95.

R
8-12 In 1784, the first training vessel from the young United States arrived in China and heralded a pattern that was to prove lucrative to many sea captains and their backers. Lawson follows the fluctuating relationships between the two countries through all of the political changes in China, through experiences as allies or as adversaries, through the presidential visit to China in 1984. He concludes with a chapter that discusses the future of U.S.-China relations. There are some chapters that deal with internal matters in China rather than with its relationship to the U.S. and the author occasionally shifts into a comment on the present while describing the past, but on the whole this is an impressive compilation of a vast amount of material; it has been thoroughly researched, carefully organized, and written with lucid objectivity. A bibliography and an index are provided.

C.U. History—China; History—U.S.; Social studies

Leigh, Vanora. *Anne Frank*; illus. by Richard Hook and with photographs. Bookwright Press/Watts, 1985. ISBN 0-531-18022-0. 30p. \$9.40.

R
4-6 Given the longstanding popularity of *The Diary of Anne Frank* among young readers, this straightforward summary of the work serves well to introduce the context of the times. The family's move from Germany to Holland, preparation for hiding, and two years in the annex with four other fugitives are all covered, with brief descriptions of daily life and a few quotes from the diary. Black-and-white historical photographs are interspersed among subdued illustrations, and a glossary, short list for further reading, and index are appended.

C.U. History—Jews

D.V. International understanding

Litke, Lael. *Shanny on Her Own*. Harcourt, 1985. ISBN 0-15-273531-3. 179p. \$12.95.

Ad
7-9 Shanny is fifteen, and she describes the events of her summer in a small Idaho town where her purple hair and baggy clothes and nose jewel seemed more conspicuous than they had in Los Angeles. Her parents had sent Shanny to help an aunt pack up for a move to a retirement home, but Aunt Adabelle proves to be a sprightly woman who prefers to remain in her own home and be independent. Most of Shanny's attention is focused on handsome Thor, who has written a skit for Pioneer Day (annual parade, rodeo, and talent show) and who seems to be attached to a pretty local girl. Few readers of the genre will be astounded when Shanny saves the show and wins the hero. This has little depth, but it has a high moral tone, adequate writing style and natural-sounding dialogue; its plot is a bit contrived but it's credible, and it has the undeniable appeal of girl gets boy.

D.V. Older-younger generations

Mabery, D.L. *Tell Me About Yourself: How to Interview Anyone from Your Friends to Famous People*. Lerner, 1985. ISBN 0-8225-1604-7. 69p. \$9.95.

Ad
5-8 There is certainly more here about interviewing famous people than about interviewing friends, and one wonders how helpful the sample conversations with Joan Rivers, Bette Midler, and Carol Channing will be, even to ambitious students. The last chapter, which relates interviewing to children's school experiences and career aspirations, should have come first. Nevertheless, the information on defining, arranging, preparing for, conducting, and writing up an interview is commonsensical and bolstered with those star-studded examples from the author's personal experience as a practicing jour-

nalist. Suggestions for incorporating interview information into reports is especially relevant.

C.U. Journalism (unit)

Martin, Ann M. *Me and Katie (the Pest)*; illus. by Blanche Sims. Holiday House, 1985. ISBN 0-8234-0580-X. 152p. \$10.95.

Ad
4-6 Sibling rivalry at its height keeps Wendy from realizing how mean it is to soak her sister's bed with cold water even though Katie *did* "goof-call" her during her tenth birthday party; or from thinking how dangerous it could be to suggest that eight-year-old Katie pick a spirited horse for her first riding lesson; or for that matter, to plant the idea that Katie should run away from home. But Wendy is sick and tired of cute, talented Katie getting all the attention, especially for the awards she seems to win so systematically. Wendy sets out to prove her own superiority and, in the course of winning a prize in a horse show, also learns to admit there are two sides to every question. This first-person narrative proceeds by mildly amusing episodes that portray a comfortably affluent family whose children pretty much get what they want but bicker on principle. Although there's nothing ventured here, the child dynamics are true, the horse appeal sure, and the plentiful dialogue easy.

D.V. Jealousy, overcoming; Self-confidence

Martin, Bill. *The Ghost-Eye Tree*; written by Bill Martin and John Archambault; illus. by Ted Rand. Holt, 1985. ISBN 0-03-005632-2. 30p. \$11.95.

R
K-3
* A top-notch hair-raiser that will do for any old night of the year but will really spike a Halloween story hour. It's poetry, too, the kind that reaches out to grab you. The narrator remembers one autumn eve when his mother asked him and his sister "to take the road/to the end of town/to get a bucket of milk." His problem is dread of a haunted old oak tree. Both his fears and his old hat draw teasing from his big sister, until, lugging their milk home, she sees the oak ghost, too. They both run pellmell home, and, in a touching finale, his sister courageously retrieves the hat he has dropped. This is very real in capturing both the siblings' tit-for-tat talking and childhood terrors in general. The language and sound patterns beg for oral presentation, and the watercolor paintings for group viewing. They give full play to light/dark contrasts, the yellows and white startling against black shapes and deep-blue skies. The focus of the compositions is arresting, too, with faces central to shadowy backgrounds. Evocative for adults and immediate for children.

C.U. Reading aloud; Hallowe'en

D.V. Fear, overcoming

Mauser, Pat Rhoads. *Rip-Off*. Atheneum, 1985. ISBN 0-689-31134-6. 158p. \$11.95.

M
7-9 Due to a shift in school population Ginger was reassigned, and she was angry about it; she'd have a long bus ride to what "everyone knew" was the worst school in town, Alcott. Once there, Ginger discovered that she was protected from the bullying and rough treatment that was prevalent by being associated with her locker-mate, Doylita, the school mascot. In gratitude for being "in," and accepted, Ginger went along with Doylita's habitual shoplifting. She even did it once herself, was caught but released, and suffered deep guilt and shame. This has a familiar pattern of rejecting the known boy for the new one and finding (but not too late) that it was a mistake, and it has a strong element of didacticism. The story is weak not because it is not believable, but because it is dull; the writing style is adequate but often padded by words or phrases that are extraneous.

D.V. Ethical concepts

Mayhar, Ardath. *Medicine Walk*. Atheneum, 1985. ISBN 0-689-31135-4. 83p. \$10.95.

Ad Burr Henderson's survival story begins on the day he turns twelve, when his father
4-6 has a heart attack piloting their small plane and dies bringing it down in the desert. With only a bottle of water, some dried fruit, a first-aid kit, a weak flashlight, and a lot of advice ringing in his mind from an old Apache friend, Burr walks through miles of inhospitable terrain. Tuning his body and mind to the land and its creatures, he turns the trek into a maturation rite whereby he combines control and intuition in meeting a rattlesnake, a cougar, his own fears, and nearly fatal deprivations. The plot is formulaic and the native American theme somewhat heavyhanded, but this is classic high-interest fare, with short, simple sentences, lots of action, and a heroic young narrator.
D.V. Courage; Self-reliance

Meltzer, Milton. *Betty Friedan: A Voice for Women's Rights*; illus. by Stephen Marchesi. Viking, 1985. ISBN 0-670-80786-9. 57p. (Women of Our Time) \$9.95.

R A readable blend of personal and social history characterizes Meltzer's brief book on
5-7 one of the founders of the women's movement. The experiences of her own life led Friedan to observe common repressions of other women and to document them in *The Feminine Mystique*, shown here to be the work of many taxing years' effort. The tone leans to admiration without adulation; the book offers perspective with its compact summary of the times that nurtured spontaneous consciousness-raising during the late 60s and early 70s. Black-and-white pencil sketches add to an accessible text.

Morris, Jean. *The Donkey's Crusade*. Bodley Head/Merrimack, 1985. ISBN 0-370-30985-5. 185p. \$11.95.

R Set during the reign of Kubla Khan, this is the story of Thomas, adolescent member
6-9 of a guild of guides, the Travellers, who sets forth with two companions and a donkey to find the mythical Prester John in hopes of getting his help against the infidel enemy of Christendom. This is a picaresque romp, told with humor and sometimes with barbed wit. It has strong characters, good pace, some interesting historical conjecture, and a distinctive style. There are two graftings of fantasy (the donkey talks occasionally and so do some "incorporeal spirits"), but this is more a realistic adventure story, and a good one, than a fanciful tale.

Norton, Andre. *Ride the Green Dragon*; written by Andre Norton and Phyllis Miller. Atheneum, 1985. ISBN 0-689-50331-8. 231p. \$12.95.

Ad The big, rambling house had been built as a home for the performers in Vargen's
4-6 circus. Now owner and performers are gone, and the Vargen estate is slow to be settled. Into the house come Tracy and Jared, whose father is examining the condition of the house on behalf of a possible owner. What the two children run into is a mystery about a lost treasure and about a man who had disappeared. There's a hostile girl who claims she's a witch, a plethora of odd coincidences, and of course some successful detective work by the children. The characters are superficially drawn, the writing style is uneven, and although the plot has moments of excitement or suspense, it is elaborate. Less might have been more. Oh yes, the dragon. It's a carrousel figure, one of many that have been hidden until Tracy and Jared come along.

Pascoe, Elaine. *Racial Prejudice*. Watts, 1985. ISBN 0-531-10057-X. 118p. illus. with photographs. \$10.90.

R An unusually clear, well-focused presentation balances discussion of general pre-
7-10 judicial patterns with specific history of the groups that have been discriminated against in the U.S. The most substantial examination is of Blacks, beginning with colonization

and continuing with the economics and social forces of slavery, reconstruction, Jim Crow laws, and the Civil Rights movement. Native Americans, Asians, and Hispanics all get an attentive survey as to their differences and similarities in responding to deeply rooted racial prejudice. A thought-provoking summary and a bibliographic essay conclude the book.

C.U. History—U.S.

D.V. Inter-cultural understanding

Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw. *Baby Horses*; illus. with photographs by William Munoz. Dodd, 1985. ISBN 0-396-08629-2. 58p. \$10.95.

Ad 3-5 yrs. Very, very young equestrians will enjoy these candid color photographs of appealing foals, but the text seems to jump around in spite of an ostensible grouping into "Beginnings," "Life with Mother," etc. The vivid opening sequence of the newborn's first attempt to stand, for instance, is illogically followed by a birth scene. Some captions seem cute, too: "Is this bush good to eat?" queries one colt. This is an underestimation of the lapsitting audience but eyecatching for those who love to look at and talk about horses.

Pringle, Laurence P. *Nuclear War: From Hiroshima to Nuclear Winter*. Enslow, 1985. ISBN 0-89490-106-0. 121p. illus. with photographs. \$11.95.

R 7-12 Pringle has built an iron-clad and disturbing case for the physical, social, economic, and ecological devastation that would follow a nuclear war. Beginning with a scientific look at early experiments with fission, he shows how military use of nuclear energy led to the bombing of Hiroshima, the arms race, and ongoing stockpiling of weapons. Statistics of casualties and estimates of destruction get careful consideration here, with frequent quotes from studies by doctors, ecologists, and economists. A final chapter on nuclear winter concludes the report, which, though admittedly anti-nuclear, does air and analyze more optimistic views. Grim but necessary information for discussion and student research, illustrated with black-and-white photographs. A glossary, strong bibliography, and index are appended.

C.U. History

Purdy, Carol. *Iva Dunnit and the Big Wind*; illus. by Steven Kellogg. Dial, 1985. Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-0184-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-0183-7. 31p. Library ed. \$12.89; Trade ed. \$12.95.

R K-3 A tall tale with a strong heroine and "six fine children... that knows how to stay put" opens with the family successfully fending off fire, wolves, and a horse thief. The Big Wind brings a peck of trouble, though. The children are snug but the chickens unsheltered ("There ain't no critter dumber than a chicken"). In rescuing her four best layers, Iva Dunnit loses her petticoats and literally holds the roof on till the kids come and save her. There's nonstop action in the illustrations, with swirling sweeps of the wind zipping along each composition and a funny slant on family and fowl alike. Kellogg's sunset colors make the prairie a striking setting for a tongue-in-cheek pioneer story with built-in child appeal.

C.U. Frontier and pioneer life (unit)

Quackenbush, Robert. *Once Upon a Time! A Story of the Brothers Grimm*; written and illus. by Robert Quackenbush. Prentice-Hall, 1985. ISBN 0-13-34536-0. 29p. \$10.95.

Ad 2-4 As in other titles in this biography series, Quackenbush selects certain aspects of his subjects to emphasize and humorize for children. Here, he stresses the Grimm brothers' closeness, from their early interest in collecting natural history specimens through their

education in law and medieval literature, to the work on folklore that made them famous. There is a bit of family background, historical context (especially the nationalistic fervor of the day), and description of the Grimms' story sources and of their final collaboration on the great German dictionary. The chocolate-colored cartoons add slapstick humor and comic-strip comments to the text, which is the only biography of the Grimms for their prime-time fairy tale audience of very young readers.

C.U. Germany (unit)—Folklore

Seide, Diane. *Nurse Power: New Vistas in Nursing*. Lodestar, 1985. ISBN 0-525-67173-0. 109p. \$12.95.

R
7- An excellent text for vocational guidance or career orientation, this gives facts about training, salaries, specialization, supervisory and administrative posts, and working through professional organizations to gain recognition and status for nurses. The writing is brisk and forthright, the organization of material and scope of the book impressive. Seide includes, in addition to a glossary, an extensive list of health care organizations, sources of scholarships and educational grants, and state boards of nursing.

C.U. Vocational guidance

D.V. Occupational orientation

Sirof, Harriet. *The Real World*. Watts, 1985. ISBN 0-531-10080-4. 184p. \$11.90.

Ad
6-9 Cady, almost fifteen, has always lived with her mother in a women's commune in Boston. Her mother, Madge, considers marriage a trap. "So I'd never seen my father. Or talked about him. Or thought about him." Suddenly Cady learns that her father is Jason Rudd, a New York architect who is married, and further learns that he'd never known that a child had been born of his affair with Madge. Cady goes to visit her father, acquires a boyfriend, and is confused by exposure to a set of values so different from those of her mother. There's a double confrontation when Madge comes to New York during Cady's stay there: first an uncomfortable observance of Cady's birthday, then a contrived meeting at a building site where Jason is the architect and Madge (an activist and a carpenter) is leading a carpenter's strike. They argue; Cady flees and goes off to an empty resort cottage with the boyfriend. There's a last scene in which all the principals gather, in the style of a theatrical full-company-on-stage, and Cady takes the initiative in working out a plan that will permit her to be with and accept the differences in her two parents. Not badly written, the book explores many issues that are of concern to young people, and its characters are believable. What weakens the story is the improbability of the several coincidences on which it depends, at times, for development.

D.V. Father-daughter relations; Mother-daughter relations; Sex roles

Slote, Alfred. *The Trouble on Janus*; illus. by James Watts. Lippincott, 1985. Library ed. ISBN 0-397-32159-7; Trade ed. ISBN 0-397-32158-9. 173p. Library ed. \$10.89; Trade ed. \$11.50.

Ad
4-6 In a fourth book about the adventures he and his "robot buddy" Danny have, Jack describes another planetary double-shooting jaunt. Danny's been created to be Jack's double, so it stretches credibility a bit that the new mission is to protect the throne of Janus, where an evil uncle has designs on young King Paul, who is—of all things—the image of Jack (and of course, of Danny too). There is plenty of action, the expectable danger and derring-do, and total success of the mission. There is too much coincidence, too much contrivance for the story to be good fantasy, but it's adequate, and it has the

appeals of familiar characters, action; and the triumph of good over evil as well as an easy, practiced writing style.

D.V. Courage

Smith, Alison, P. *A Trap of Gold*. Dodd, 1985. ISBN 0-396-08721-3. 176p. \$10.95.

Ad
4-6 In the summer when her father is away on an assignment, Margaret loses the gold nugget he'd given her, a family heirloom. Her efforts to find another nugget to replace it lead to squabbles with her sister (separated from her husband and living now, along with three tiresome children, with Margaret and her very nice stepmother, Connie). Her search also leads to an exciting and dangerous visit to an old mine, where her life is threatened by a man who's one of the town's most respected citizens. There's a red herring here and there (an escaped prisoner who plays no part in the story) and a rather heavy cast of characters, but the basic plot stands up well, and the writing has good pace and flow.

D.V. Stepparent-child relations

Stanley, Diane. *A Country Tale*; written and illus. by Diane Stanley. Macmillan, 1985. ISBN 0-02-786780-3. 29p. \$12.95.

R
K-3 An elegant book that spoofs elegance, this gets away with an old-fashioned air because the subject is durably relevant. Two close country friends, Cleo and Lucy, are affected by the arrival of wealthy, snobbish Mrs. Snickers from the city. The grand dame succeeds in making Cleo feel discontented with her lot and in completely rejecting Lucy, who has enough good sense to ride out Cleo's temporary attack of fashion and eventually help her back to her old self. The characters are meticulously drawn cats, each whisker and patch of fur fine-lined. The expressions are both feline and typically human, as in Cleo's careful imitation of Mrs. Snickers' pout. Colors are sometimes sharply patterned and then again, subtly blended. Children will recognize a playground situation in this pastoral, Victorian setting.

D.V. Friendship values

Stolz, Mary Slattery. *Night of Ghosts and Hermits: Nocturnal Life on the Seashore*; illus. by Susan Gallagher. Harcourt, 1985. ISBN 0-15-257333-X. 40p. \$12.95.

R
2-4 This is the kind of story that doesn't interfere with science but enhances it. The book opens with three children building a sand castle. After they go home to bed, the narrative picks up on what happens all around their handiwork, starting with a ghost crab that invades it and ending with a hermit crab that walks away in the tiny bottle that served as guard to the castle. Meanwhile, readers learn of symbiosis, the ongoing search of all creatures for food and shelter, a sea-turtle's egg-laying, a specific understanding of the seashore system. The writing is lyrical but never overdramatic, the items of information intriguingly related. Finely shaded drawings are both accurate and aesthetically involving. Glossary, bibliography, and labelled diagrams identifying all the creatures discussed are appended.

C.U. Nature study

Swenson, Judy Harris. *Cancer: The Whispered Word*; written by Judy Harris Swenson and Roxanne Brown Kunz; illus. by Jeanette Swofford. Dillon, 1985. ISBN 0-87518-310-7. 36p. \$8.95.

Ad
2-4 Although cast in a narrative framework, this is really an informational book; it gives information and advice that may help children understand—or understand more—about cancer, but its effectiveness is limited by the flat first-person style and the narrator's divulging of facts that vitiate what story line exists. The authors describe a child's

reaction to mother's illness, give information about symptoms, treatment, prognosis, fallacies, and family stress. The writing is clear but rather dull; the book ends with a list of "Activity Suggestions for Parents and Children" that includes a few recipes.

Vaës, Alain. *The Wild Hamster*; written and illus. by Alain Vaës. Little, 1985. ISBN 0-316-89504-0. 28p. \$14.95.

Ad 4-7 yrs. A strange story with surrealistic dimensions of both text and art, this describes a "little mouselike animal" found and nurtured by a farm family from some undefined period in the past. The hamster grows to gigantic proportions, but the children manage to protect it from the frightened villagers until it begins to demolish the surrounding forests and fields. Rather than killing the beast, the villagers build a huge wheel connected to a mill; the hamster enjoys himself, grinds grain for the whole country, and is prevented by the exercise from getting any bigger. And that's why hamsters still have wheels in their cages. Well, maybe. The story would have gotten farther on the strength of its absurdity had the illustrations had a humorous tone, but they are serious paintings weighted with brown tones, grim figures, and trompe l'oeil effects. The art itself is absorbing, and children with "little mouselike animals" of their own will find the whole thing mindstretching if a trifle trumped-up.

Vincent, Gabrielle, illus. *Ernest and Celestine's Patchwork Quilt*. Greenwillow, 1985. ISBN 0-688-04557-X. 16p. \$5.25.

Ad 3-5 yrs. Like *Breakfast Time*, *Ernest and Celestine*, this is a small, square book with no text, and the pictures have the same visual appeals. The story, however, may be less clear to young children unless they are observant enough to notice the differences in the beds of the protagonists, a crucial factor in the action. Having retrieved the books of cloth samples a store owner had thrown away, patient Ernest makes a patchwork quilt at Celestine's instigation. Finished, the quilt is put on a bed; Celestine sits on it, hops off, appears to plead with Ernest, and then there's more sewing. Last picture: Celestine snuggled into bed under a patchwork quilt.

Whitmore, Arvella. *You're a Real Hero, Amanda*. Houghton, 1985. ISBN 0-395-38950-X. 184p. \$12.95.

R 5-7 At the beginning of fifth grade, Amanda reads aloud a composition about her pet rooster and finds out about a new ordinance banning chickens from her small mid-western town. In spite of her best—and sometimes funny—efforts to hide him, he is stolen by the local bootlegger, a mean man whose wife almost dies before Amanda's doctor-father performs an emergency appendectomy on a kitchen table. What deepens this traditional story is a subplot in which a beautiful young girl, Virginia, becomes pregnant by a rakish tramp and suffers her repressive society's stigma, a situation forcing Amanda into some careful thinking about right and wrong. The Depression-era setting is vivid; so is the sense of childhood, especially in the guilt Amanda carries over Virginia's secret and in her determination to regain her pet. Characterization is strong, and the plot lines are knit with a substantial theme. Only the pace sags from time to time.

D.V. Perseverance; Truthfulness.

Williams, Terry Tempest. *Between Cattails*; illus. by Peter Parnall. Scribner, 1985. ISBN 0-684-18309-9. 29p. \$13.95.

A fine balance of content and form, this lyrical text describes a marsh habitat without compromise of either poetry or natural history. The call of redwing blackbirds, the stance of the heron, the movement of the muskrat, the stealth of the weasel are projected with Parnall's organic shapes in green and gold against striking white back-

R grounds. Like the marsh it describes, the book "is open space/with secret colors,/ 5-8 patterns,/ and forms." Illustrating the phrase "As one bird is consumed,/another is yrs. conceived" is a female nesting in a white egg-shaped circle with its mate swimming * sperm-shaped toward it. The free verse is skillfully handled, once likening ecological chain reactions to rhythms in "The House That Jack Built"; and again, striking the reader with an image of geese flying "Where great waves of wind/move the sky/as wings/crisply fold back/the air." Children studying environmental science will not miss the point: "To save these/stories/we must treat the marsh/tenderly."

C.U. Ecology; Nature study

Wilson, Sarah. *Beware the Dragons!*; written and illus. by Sarah Wilson. Harper, 1985. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-026509-4; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-026508-6. 29p. Library ed. \$9.89; Trade ed. \$9.95.

M Tildy, a little girl who is given to such exclamations as "Great Crying Cuttlefish!" K-2 or "Shivering Shark Tails!" is surrounded by dragons when she goes out in a rowboat alone. She scolds the dragons because they toss her in the air, but then realizes that they only want to play. Tildy gets the storekeeper to donate water toys and (since she's had a long discussion with the dragons) she shows the assembled townspeople that their fear of dragons has been unwarranted. This has a lot of exclamation marks, but beyond the appeals of dragons and action, there isn't really much to exclaim about; the story is frenetically told and seems contrived. The illustrations, soft in color and rollicking in mood, are more successful than the writing.

Woods, Geraldine. *Cocaine*; written by Geraldine and Harold Woods. Watts, 1985. ISBN 0-531-10035-9. 68p. illus. with photographs. \$9.40.

Ad Statistics show that the number of cocaine addicts is growing, and it is indeed use- 7-10 ful to have a book devoted to the subject, usually covered in less depth in books about all addictive drugs. This is weakened, however, by awkward stylistic errors, and by uneven treatment of material within chapters, although the chapter arrangement itself is adequate. The authors discuss the drug and its history, abuse, the effects of addiction, its treatment, and the cocaine trade. The glossary and bibliography are preceded by a list of places from which information and help may be obtained.

Wright, Betty Ren. *Christina's Ghost*. Holiday House, 1985. ISBN 0-8234-0581-8. 105p. \$10.95.

Ad Easy, lightweight fiction, this relies on tried-and-true ingredients for flavor: an old 3-5 haunted house, a young ghost dating from some unsolved murders many years previous, and a girl exploring on her own with minimal supervision. There are certainly no new twists here, but the tension between Christina and her misanthropic uncle lends substance, and the presence of evil in the form of threatening footsteps plus a cold wind ups the pace. The uncle's transition from skeptic to believer will please readers on the lookout for adult witnesses to the world of makebelieve.

D.V. Courage

We regret that the review of Selina Hastings' *Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady* in the November issue erroneously states that Walker is the publisher. Although the book was originally published by Walker in London, its U.S. publisher is Lothrop.

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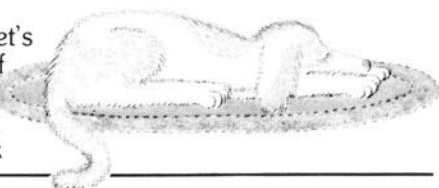


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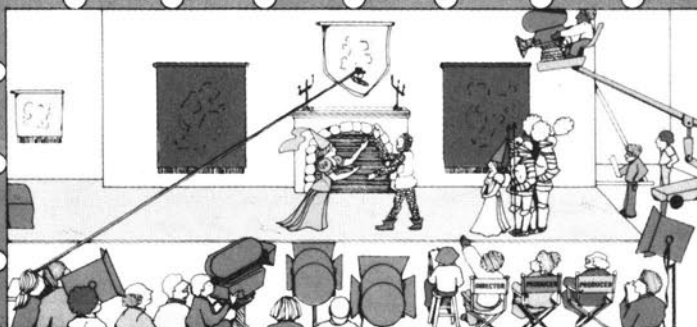
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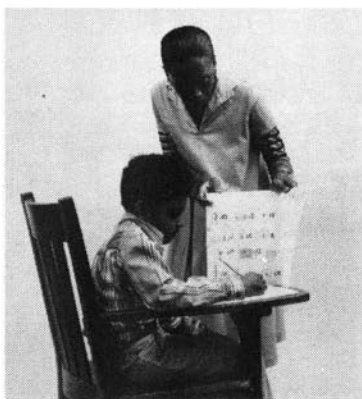
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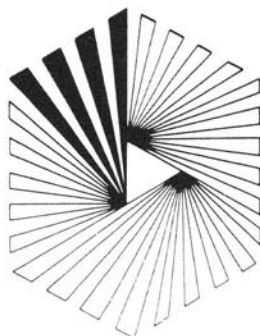
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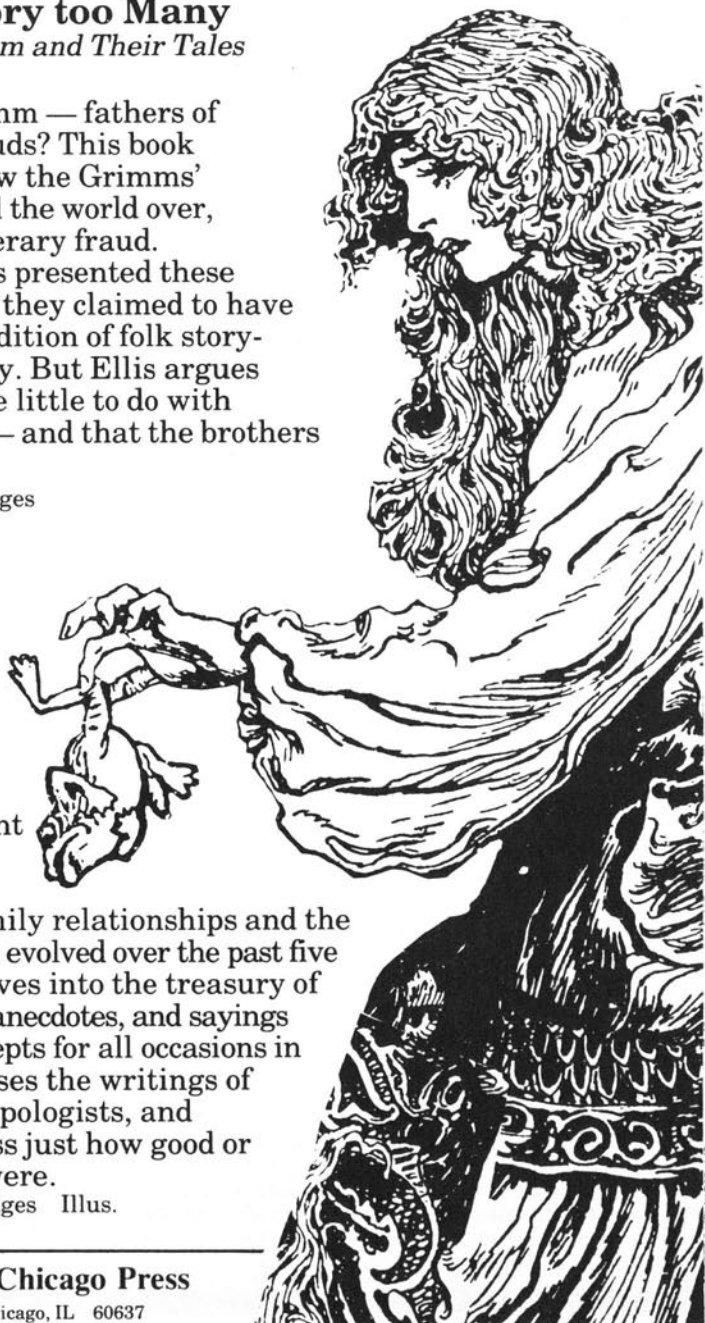
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